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SUBJECT: MALDIVES: THE EIGHTH ANNUAL ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS  
(TIP) REPORT

REF: STATE 02731

¶1. (U) Mission's submission for the eighth annual Anti-Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report for Maldives follows. Responses are keyed to questions in reftel. Mission point of contact is Poloff Amy Trimble, telephone +94-11-249-8822, fax +94-11-249-8820.

Paragraph 27: Maldives Overview  
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¶2. (SBU) A -- Maldives is not a country of origin, transit, or destination for a significant number of internationally trafficked persons. In 2007, in the only instance of trafficking known to post, a Thai woman who had been recruited to work in a spa reported being detained by a Maldivian employer and forced to work as a housemaid, receiving a lower salary than promised. The labor recruiter was arrested by Thai authorities and charged with illegal labor brokering. There were no reports of persons trafficked from or within the country.

A, continued -- On the website for its October 2007 South Asia Regional Conference, the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) stated: "There are hardly any reports of trafficking in persons from the Maldives. Laws prevent employment of children under 14 but the law does not talk about trafficking in persons." In a 2007 report, the Asian Development Bank stated, "the Maldives does not experience the levels of absolute poverty which drive women in other South Asian countries into risky occupations or increase their risk of becoming the victims of human trafficking." A 2006 report by the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime listed Maldives as "low" incidence of reporting as an origin country, "very low" incidence of reporting as a destination country, and did not list Maldives as a transit country.

B -- There does not appear to be a human trafficking problem in Maldives. The law does not prohibit trafficking in persons. Nevertheless, the government has participated in regional efforts to combat human trafficking in South Asia.

C -- There are no government agencies uniquely involved in anti-trafficking efforts. However, representatives of the Child Protection Authority and the National Human Rights Commission participated in the UN.GIFT's October 2007 regional conference.

D-E -- Funding for the police is adequate, and the government monitors immigration and emigration patterns to avoid illegal immigration of all types.

Paragraph 28: Investigations and  
Prosecution of Traffickers

13. (SBU) A -- Maldives does not have a law that prohibits  
trafficking in persons.

B -- Not applicable.

C -- The law does not prohibit forced or compulsory labor, including  
by children, and there were reports that child labor occurred in  
some sectors of the economy. However, the law bars children less  
than 14 years of age from paid or hazardous work. Government  
employment guidelines prohibit hiring of children under 18 and  
employment in hazardous jobs. The Child Protection Unit of the  
Ministry of Gender and Family is responsible for monitoring  
compliance with the Child Protection Act.

D -- There are no laws pertaining to sexual harassment or domestic  
violence against women, and no specific laws dealing with spousal  
rape. Police officials reported that they received few complaints of  
assaults against women. The Gender Equality Council advised the  
government on policies to help strengthen the role of women.

E -- Prostitution is illegal, but occurred on a small scale in  
2007.

M -- There were no reports of child sex tourism in Maldives.  
However, in 2007 the Ministry of Gender and Family Development  
reported child abuse, including sexual abuse. Penalties for the  
sexual abuse of children ranged from as much as three years'  
imprisonment to banishment to a remote atoll. At a January 2007  
meeting on Maldives held by the UN Committee on Elimination of  
Discrimination against Women, the Minister of Gender and Family said  
that "to address emerging issues, the Government was amending [the

law on protection of the rights of the child], especially in the  
area of trafficking and sexual exploitation of children."

Paragraph 29: Protection and Assistance  
to Victims

14. (SBU) C -- The government does not provide funding or material  
support to foreign or domestic NGOs for services to victims of  
trafficking.

G -- Not applicable.

BLAKE